

THE
PENITENT
SINNERS EN-
TERTAIN-
MENT.

Set foorth by M^r. IOHN
HILL, Student in Divinitie, and
now Preacher of Gods Word at
Dublin in IRELAND.



AT LONDON
Printed by IOHN BEALE, for
IONAS MAN. 1614.



THE
PENITENT
 SINNER'S EN-
 TREATY

See fourth by M. John
 Hill, Student in Divinity, and
 now Preacher of Gods Word
 in Dublin Ireland.



10 3 01
 AT LONDON
 Printed by John Baskin, W.
 Thomas M. 1811



TO THE VVOR-
shipfull and vertuous Gen-
tlewomen M^r. TEMPERANCE

CREW, wife to M^r. Thomas Crew,
and M^{rs}. Mary Blinco, wife to M^r. John

Blinco, I. H. desireth all grace and
peace vnsainedly to bee mul-
tiplied: &c.

Holy, and christian gen-
tlewomen, whom I loue
in the truth, I hope I ^{1. Ioh. 1.}
may speake of you as did
that worthy Apostle of the elect da-
dy, who by the fruits of her piety
and godlines, manifested her electio-
n: so you by the loue you beare towa-
rds God, his ordinances, and ser-
uants, doe declare euidently, your ^{1. Ioh. 3. 14}

The Epistle

translation from death to life, and
by your vertuous and holie liues,
you demonstrate freedom from sin,
which are of euerlasting life. I haue
made bolde (Christian Gentlewo-
men) to patronize this small worke
vnder your fauours, in token of
thankesfulnes, for your many fauours
I haue receiued from you; not doubting
but small things of this nature,
will bee much respected, and wil-
lingly receiued, both in respect of
your owne priuate gaine, as also
the profit & benefit, which the whole
Church of God may reap & gather
fro it. Now if you, or the rest of the
body of Christ shall receiue any bene-
fit by it, for the furthering of that
worke

Dedicatorie.

worke of repentance, and sanctification of life, giue God the glory and praise.

And so I humbly take my leave, commending you to the providence of *Act. 1. 3.* God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build further, and to giue you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

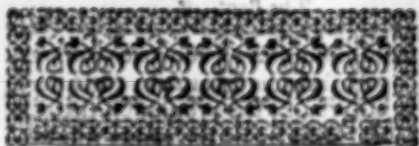
Steane this 20. of Aprill 1612.

Yours in all christian duties
to commaund

IOHN HILL.

1996

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THE
PENITENT
SINNERS EN-
TERTAIN-
MENT.

LUKE 15. 20, 21, 22, &c.

*So he arose and came to his Father and when
he was yet a great way off, his Father saw
him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell
on his necke, &c.*

All this parable of a god-
ly and religious father, and
a stubborne and impious
sonne, is prefigured and set
downe, the vnspokeable
loue and compassion of God our heauen-
ly father to all his children in Iesus Christ,
which haue beene rebellious and disobe-
dient before their calling.

B

In

In these words are set down two things,
 First the duties of a penitent sinner,
viz. Secondly the promotion that the
 penitent person comes vnto.

In the duties of the penitent person,
 there are two things to be considered.

First, a perswasion of mercy, & sure confidence of obtaining compassion, if he did returne, implied in the word (Father) as if he should haue said, truth it is O Father, as my life & works haue beene toward thee, I doe not deserue to be thy son (as in the words following may appeare) but yet neuer the lesse, I am perswaded, that though I haue failed of my duty towards thee, yet thou wilt not faile of thy loue to me: & although there be no desert of mercy in me, yet I know there is compassion for seeking for with thee: and this is the first ground the penitent person laies, to obtaine mercie.

Secondly, the penitent person confesseth his sinne, whereby he had offended his father, for there must be a confession, that as the childe is to be well perswaded of the loue of his father, so hee must be ill perswaded of himselfe, in respect

pect of his sinne, and therefore he saith, *I haue sinned against heauen and before thee*: that is, against the God of heauen, and against thee my naturall father, and so I haue broken both the tables of the commandements.

And he confesseth also, he was not worthie to be called a sonne to so godly a father, or to receiue mercie that was so full of impietie, making himselfe vile and base in his owne eyes, that he might be highly esteemed in his Fathers eyes: which is the first part.

Now for the second part of this text, which is the promotion the penitent sinner shall be exalted vnto; set downe in the 22. & 23. verses, rendering a reason wherefore the father did thus promote him.

The promotion set downe is this; the father seeing his riotous and vnchristie sonne returne home, with a broken and humble heart, and with a resolution to become a new man, and rather desiring his fathers loue then his goods, he presently offers himselfe to his childe, & before he could aske for his needs, he commaunds his seruants to bring forth such

B 2 things

things as his penitent sonne wanted, and to giue it before he did craue it, for the father seeing his sonne so well clothed with humilitie and with godly remorse for his former life within, he wil not reiect him, though he came poore and ragged outward, but calls for the best robe to couer him.

The comparison is taken from a King and a princelike childe, whose manner was to weare robes, and before the sonne could aske for apparrell which he stood in neede of, the father giues him a robe to put on: for seeing he had made himselfe base in his owne eyes, he would cloath him royally that hee might seeme precious in his fathers eyes.

And put a ring on his hand: that is, hee would not only giue him things for necessity, but also to adorne & beautifie him, & as the Apostle saith, vpon our vncomely parts he will put more comelinesse on.

And shoes on his feete] And whereas he came barefooted to his father, he commaunds shoes to be put on his feete, to keepe and preserue them from thornes and stones that might annoy & hurt the.

And

And bring the fatte calfe &c.] And whereas he came with a languishing stomacke for want of meate (for before he had beene feeding amongst swine) now he will refresh him with a tender calfe; with pleasant and comfortable meate.

And let vs eat & be merie.] Here is cause of mirth & reioycing on both sides; First on the fathers side, that had lost an vn-wardly sonne, and now had found an obedient sonne, that went from him dead in his sinnes, and returned quickned vnto the life of grace, that departed impenitent, and returned humbled; in all which there was cause of mirth, and this cause the father renders himselfe to his eldest sonne; for my sonne was dead and is now aliue, he was lost, but is now found, &c. Secondly there was cause of reioycing in the sonne, because he went from his father a dead man, and now he comes to his father a liuing man: he went from him stubborn, proude, disobedient, he returns meeke, penitent, and obedient; in truth he departed from him a childe of *Belial* and returns to him the childe of God; in all which, there was great cause of joy

on both sides. And so much for the somme and order of these words.

The drift of the parable is, that if a godly father had a stubborne and vngodly sonne that had departed from him; and spent his portion amongst ryotous and lewd companions, yet if the father should see his sonne come home in that manner as is before alleadged, hee would receiue him againe, nay he ought (in truth) to entertaine him into his fauour againe with ioy, passing by all his stubborne and disobedient behauiours, remitting all his faults, and receiue him as his childe againe, notwithstanding all his offences.

Applica-
tion.

Then the application of this Parable is, that if the people of God haue beene Apostates, reuolters, rebels, and disobedient vnto God, yet if they would from a plaine and an honest heart, returne to God by true and sound repentance, confessing their sinnes with godly sorrow, & iudging themselues not worthy of mercy; then wil the Lord, command his ministers to put on the rich robe of Christ his righteousness; and they shall be adorned with the graces and gifts of his spirit, and
shod

shod with the gospel of peace, and giue them the flesh and blood of his sonne, and the comfort and ioy of the spirit, and that haue communion with God in Christ Iesus, and this will God bestow vpon euery penitent sinner. For if a naturall parent can shew so much mercie to so vngenerous and impious a childe when hee humbles himselfe vnto him, that hath but a drop of mercie, in comparison of the Ocean and Sea of mercie which is in God, how much more will God shew mercie vnto such penitent and humble sinners, that with sence and feeling of their sinnes and wants can come to God for mercie? And so much for the explication and application of the words.

And the sonne said vnto him father, &c. that is, the penitent childe said vnto his naturall father. But before we come to gather any doctrine from the very words of the text; there ariseth a doctrine fro the dependance of the words, in the 17 and 18 verses; for when he came to himselfe and was his owne man, and was awakened out of his spirituall frenzie, then he considered what he might doe; and be-

gins with this resolution; *I will goe to my father and say, &c.*] he begins to loath that course of life; and now doth put that in practise, which before he did but purpose; and put that in deede, which before he had but thought in minde. From hence ariseth naturally this doctrine.

Doctrine.

That resolution in heart and action in life must goe together.

Ruth. 1.

That where there is true repentance, there is not onely good purposes in the heart, but also good endeavors and actions in the life, not onely thinke and say well, but also practise and doe well. This we may see verie fitly proved vnto vs, in the examples of *Ruth* and *Orpah*, both of them purposed a like, for both protested to companie with *Naamie* to her owne countrie, to serue the God of heauen; but *Orpah* hearing the reasons against that her purpose, returned backe to serue their idols: but *Ruth* hauing beene grounded by true repentance, to the loue of true religion held on her resolution, although her Mother in law did bring her sisters example as an argument to perswade her to returne also; but she replies against her Mothers speeches, saying, *intreate mee not to returne, for whether thou goest I will*

will goe, and where thou dwellest I will dwell, thy people shall bee my people, and thy God my God. And what made Ruth so good of her word in this respect, because she was come to her selfe, and true repentance, which made her thus purpose and performe.

The like we see in *Paul* when he came to repentance, he resolved to leane his blasphemie and persecuting of the Saints of God, and so did: he was as good in action, as he was in purpose and affection. This doctrine being so; may also be farther confirmed by reasons drawne from the holy scriptures of God.

First, because whosoever comes to true repentance, will have stronger reasons to doe well then to doe ill, and better arguments for godlinesse, then he can for sinne and wickednesse; as here we see this prodigall childe had; and so the Church in *Hosea*, when the Lord met with them by his iudgements and stopped the way, of injoying their outward blessings in that abundance which they had beforetime enjoyed; and all because they did attribute their plentie to their
Reason 1.
Hos. 1. 7.
idols,

Ncl 14.4.

idols, but in their penurie and want they haue better reasons; and say, I will goe and returne to my first husband (that is to Christ) for at that time I was better then now; as also in the fourteenth chapter, when they come to repentance for their idolatrie, they say; neither will we say any more to the worke of our hands, ye are our gods, for in thee the fatherlesse finde mercie; as if they should haue said, we will not be so ignorant and sottish any longer, to thinke that an Idoll or carued peece of wood can pittie vs or shew vs any compassion, for they are but our creatures, and therefore it argues, that they should rather kneele and bow to vs, then we to them; thus we see their iudgements are better informed when they came to repentance, then they were before, for repentance is a change of the minde, as it signifies.

Secondly, looke what reasons men haue to purpose well, the same reasons they haue to hold out well; the same arguments which worke good affections in ones heart, will also hold out to bring forth good actions in the life, as better, the

the prodigall childe.

Thirdly, where true repentance is, there will be also godly sorrow (for it causeth repentance, as the Apostle saith) and where godly sorrow begins, these effects will follow. First, a holy care to leaue euill, and to practise that which is good. Secondly, a clearing of ones selfe from ones sin. Thirdly, it will worke an indignation and a holy anger against ones sin. Fourthly, a godly feare to commit sin the time euer after. Fifthly, a desire to serue God more, & to haue a greater measure of grace to please him better. Sixthly, a godly zeale of gods glorie, and after the spirituall meanes of ones saluation. And Lastly, a holy reuenge vpon ones owne selfe, for the sinnes whereby wee haue dishonoured God: and these are the effects of true repentance. And to this effect doth the Apostle *James* speake, *Cleanse your handes ye sinners, and purge your hearts yee double-minded* But they might obiect, How shall we come to this purging and clensing of both inside and outside? He answers them in these words following; suffer afflictions, and sorrow yee

1. Cor. 7.
10.

1. James 2.

ye and weepe, let your laughter be turned into mourning, & your ioy into heauinesse; as if he should haue said, if you will purge your heart from sin, and part the sin from the soule, you must come to godly sorrow for your sins: for the nature of sin is such, that it is like a little childe, it will tarrie longest there where it is most made of, so if we will loue and make much of sinne we shall haue his company, but if we will labour to afflict our soules for our sinnes and sorrow for it, we shall quickly be rid of it.

Use 1.

Sith it is so, that they that haue truly repented, will not onely haue good purposes and motions, but also good endeauours and good actions, It serues, first for reproofe of such persons as would haue Gods children to thinke that they haue repented, because they purpose to leaue their sinnes: they will say, they haue a purpose to forsake their couetousnesse, to leaue their swearing, Sabbath-breaking, their drunkennesse and such like sinnes, and will proceede no further: but aske them wherefore you would haue vs conteeue so well of you
that

that you haue repented? because we purpose well; It is true, good motions are to bee respected, but if they doe not bring forth good actions, they are no better then quaules and passions that may be in verie wicked men and hypocrites: for if there be good desires in the heart, there will follow certainly good endeauours and actions in the whole man. *Saul* in a passion would confesse to *David*, O my sonne *David*, thou art more righteous then I; and why did he presently fall to persecute *David* againe? was it not because the spirit of God neuer conuincd his conscience of the sinne, and he neuer came to godly sorrow for the same, and therefore these were but passions, which died before they brought forth good actions? *Iudas* also could come to this, *I haue sinned in betraying innocent blood*: so farre he went well: but hee could not come to repentance to craue pardon, for had he repented hee might haue beene pardoned, and if he could haue beleued he should haue bene saued, but doing neither, he was damned. Such passions and quaules

Luk. 14.
28. 29.

Hos. 6. 9.

quaulmes had they, which in all the hast, would goe and build vpon Christ: they did not consider beforehand what charges it would amount vnto, and whether they were able to vndertake so great a building, and therefore hauing begunne, they could not proceede, but left off and were not able to finish it: So manie haue sudden flashings and passions come into their mindes, to doe good things, but not considering the danger nor charges that one must be at, if they purpose to build vpon Christ, they let their sute fall, and their purposes are quickly extinct and quenched before they come forth to action. But these passions the Prophet *Hosea* compares to the morning dewe. *O Ephraim what shall I doe vnto thee, O Iudah how shall I intreate thee? for your goodnesse is like the morning cloude, and as the Morning dewe it goeth away: that is, as soone as the sunne ariseth and shewes forth his beames of light, it lickes vp the dewe vpon the grasse; so soone passeth your goodnesse, and it is of no continuance. Of such a nature are all these passions and sudden quaulmes that many may haue*

haue, and yet be verie sinnefull and wicked: manie haue these flashings when they come to the Sacrament, and will haue these purposes to leaue their couetousnesse, their swearing, Sabbath breaking, and all their knowne and notorious sinnes; and they will also purpose to pray more, frequent the exercises of religion more, and they will amend many disorders which are amisse (if it might be all remedied with thoughts and purposes) but after the Sacrament they are as prophane and sinnefull as euer they were before, and are neuer a whit the better in practise and conuersation. Oh before they goe to the Sacrament they will purpose to make satisfaction to such whom they haue wronged, and to liue as friends with them which in times past they haue much grieued; but let the Sacrament be past, there is no more hearing of satisfaction, nor acknowledgement of iniuries and wrongs offered; yet we shall haue these vnconstant men perswade themselues they haue repented, & would haue others so to thinke and reckon of them: but such must know that they haue
not

not yet repented, till these motions and purposes conceived, bring forth good actions in life to be practised.

2. Secondly, it serves for instruction, that seeing true repentance stands in resolving and doing, therefore if euer we will haue anie sound comfort to our soules and consciences, whensoever the spirit of God hath put into our hearts good motions and good affections, let vs follow them hard to bring them to perfection, and then wee shall be blessed in the worke (as the Apostle *James* speaketh:) let vs labour to doe that which *Barnabas* exhorts the faithfull brethren at *Antiochia*; That with purpose of heart, they should continue in the Lord. So let vs with all purpose of heart resolve to leaue our sinnes, and to practise holy and good dueties: let vs be like vnto this prodigall childe, which did purpose and practise, and so we shall haue a good testimonie to our hearts that wee haue repented.

Oh but, I can no sooner haue a good motion come into my heart, but Satan is readie to steale it out, and mine owne corrup-

corruption to extinguish it, before I can bring it forth to action? but labour to put in practice these rules which by Gods grace may helpe thee, to cherish good motions & further them, that they come out to practice in thy life and conuersation.

First, if wee would haue our good desires to come to good deedes, wee must labour to come to sound and thorough sorrow of heart for sinnes past; and let vs pluck the roots of sinne vp by the weeding hooke of godly sorrow, and then wee shall bring forth good actions; and therefore the Apostle *Iames* in the place before alleadged, exhorts his hearers to purge their hearts by godly sorrow, for it will breake the cords of sinne, and kill it by degrees. And to the intent that wee may sorrow for sinne, let vs bee frequent in meditating of what sinne would haue done to vs, namely haue killed vs, (for the wages of sinne is death) and exposed vs to the euerlasting wrath of God. Also consider, that our sins killed Iesus Christ the Lord of life, they were the murthers and betrayes of this iust one. And what-

C

focuer

sooner woe or miserie hath or can befall vs in this present life, is the effect of these our sinnes. Thus seriously pondering of these things, it will procure godly sorrow for sinne, which godly sorrow will produce good actions from good motions.

2

Secondly, wee must bring good reasons and arguments against our corruptions, and Satans temptations, for if wee fall out with the diuell, and wee haue not better arguments to stand for good duties, then hee hath against them, wee shall not bee able to hould out. For if *Saul* could haue had good arguments and reasons when he pursued and sought against *David*, if hee could haue considered, suerly in fighting against *David*, I fight against my best friend, and my faithfullest subiect, yea in so doing I shall fight against God, and mine owne saluation &c. then hee would neuer haue followed him with such a deadly malice. *Iob* that faithfull seruant of God, hee had good reasons to keepe him from sinne, as appeareth, *I haue made a covenant with mine eyes, why should I thinke on a maid, and what portion should I*

Iob 31. 1,
3, 3.

I

*I haue of God from above, and what inheritance from the almighty from on high? is there not destruction to the wicked, and strange punishments to the workers of iniquity? Why doth Iob bee so diligent in watching ouer his senses lest hee should offend? His reason is, if hee should not haue regard to them, hee knew that the Lord would not regard him: and if hee should haue let loose his eies to behold wantonnes, hee knew hee should quickly loose the fauour of God, and letting his eies take their liberty, hee should suddenly haue tasted some miserie: for hee knew there were strange punishments for the workers of iniquity. Oh but who takes notice of ones thoughts and lookes? I may let my eies to take their liberty, and no man can perceiue it; nay, but Iob makes answere, *Doth not God behold my waies and tell all my steppes?* And although man cannot take notice of my lustfull heart and eies, yet the allseeing God doth behold it, and considers my steppes. Which made him not so much as wrong his poorest seruant hee kept: for saith he, *If I did contemne the iudgment of my seru**

13. 19 VII.

nant, and of my maide, when they did con-
 tend with me, what then shall I doe when
 God standeth vp? and when hee shall visite
 me what shal I answer? And the reason why
 Iob durit not bee froward with his ser-
 uants; because saith hee, *Hee that made*
me in the wombe, hath hee not made him?
 As if hee should haue said, it may bee my
 seruant may bee as dearly beloued of
 God as I my selfe, and hee may bee an
 heire of Heauen as well as I; at least wise,
 I know wee are both his workmanship;
 and therefore I dare not vex and iniure
 him. The whole chapter doth run vpon
 such arguments and reasons.

3

The third thing to make one constant,
 is, when the Lord hath put into our
 mindes good motions, that wee delay
 not, but presently and quickly put them
 in practise, and bring it forth into action,
 as the prodigall childe here did, for imme-
 diately as soone as this came into his
 minde, *I will rise and goe to my Father*,
 hee delaied not, but rose and came to his
 father. So the prophet David did, finding
 himselfe out of the way, hee saith, *I made*
hast and delaied not to keepe thy commande-
ments.

Psal. 119.
 60.

ments, Whiles the wound is greene, it is best to goe to the Surgeon: and wee haue an old prouerbe, It is good striking, whiles the iron is hot; so when God puts into our hearts good affections, let vs quickly put them in practise; whiles hee warmes vs with the word & Sacraments, let vs not delay but speedily put it in action, and whiles hee speaks by afflictions, let vs resolve vppon a holy conuersation. Now many when they come to the word, and hearing of such duties which they ought to practise, as for prayer to be performed of euery one, at the least both morning and euening, the heart is presently affected with it, and resolve to practise it, but so soone as they are gone out of the Church, they defer the putting the duty in practise by and by, and so those motions die before they come forth into action: and all because they doe not speedily goe about the worke; for as fire without supplie of fuelle will quickly bee extinguished, euen so the delaying of putting these good resolutions and desires in practise, doe quickly goe out, and it leaues such a deadnes and hardnes of heart, and makes

one more duller to euery good dutie: wherefore whiles the heart is warme with any good motion, let vs speedily put it in practise.

4

Fourthly, to the end wee may haue all our purposes and desires come to actions and true endeuours, wee must take heed of bad company, for they will quickly quench the good motions of the spirit, that they may neuer come forth to actions: for if this prodigall childe should vpon this determination haue gone and told his companions of this his resolution, they would haue quickly dissuaded him from his purpose, but hee neuer goes to them to take their aduise, but of himselfe resolues and doeth. And this the Apostle *Peter* exhorts the new conuerts vnto,

Act. 1.40.

Sane your selues from this froward generation, then they should bee sure to hold out, and not bee perverted, nor our mindes altered & changed. And so much for the first doctrine.

So hee arose, and came to his father, and said to him, Father &c. In this confession which the prodigall childe doth make,
he

hee begins with that which brought him home, even the true consideration that he had a Father, and the perswasion of mercie, if hee did returne, was it as brought him home, and so to repentance. From hence ariseth plainly this doctrine.

That the perswasion of mercie is a speciall meanes to worke true repentance and sound reformation in vs, no better a motiue to driue vs to true repentance, then the perswasion of mercie from God: for if this prodigal childe should haue had this conceit to haue come into his braine, I will goe home, but my father will hit mee in the teeth of my sinne and former behaviour towards him, or that it may bee hee will whippe mee out of his doores, or commit mee to the house of correction, and such like, hee would neuer haue returned home, but rather haue ended his life amongst the swine, then to haue gone to such a cruell Father: but the perswasion of mercie drives him home. For prooffe of this doctrine, the holy Ghost by the author to the Hebrewes saith, *For hee that cometh to God, must beleene that God is, and that hee is a rewarder of them*

them that seeke him : hee that will come to God and seeke him indeede, must bee perswaded to finde him in mercy, and that he will bestow his loue and fauour vpon him ; for it is the perswasion of good successe that makes one goe to God: and therefore the Prophet saith, That mercie is with thee that thou mightest bee feared, as if hee should haue said, I should neuer haue reuerenced thy name, but that there is hope of mercie and grace from thee. Therefore the diuels hauing no hope of mercie, they doe not, nor cannot feare the Lord. Wherefore let vs set downe this as a maine conclusion, that if wee cannot haue mercie from heauen, wee shall haue mercie from no place.

The Apostle Paul doth vrge the mercie of God, to the Romans, as a forcible argument to serue God. I beseech you bretheren, by the mercies of God, that you giue vp your bodies a liuing sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your reasonable seruice of God; where the mercies of God are a speciall motiue to stirre them vp to serue God.

Also the prophet Zacharie saith, I will
power

power upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Ierusalem the spirit of grace and prayers, and they shall looke upon mee, whom they haue pierced, and they shall lament for him, as one mourneth for his onely sonne, whom &c. This will make one turne to Christ, when they see their sins so odious, as to bee the speciall instruments to wound and kill the Lord of life, and also when they doe consider that Christ gaue himselfe for them, this infinite loue and mercie, will mooue them to true repentance and godly sorrow.

It is not misery as can conuert one to God, and turne one from ones sinne; for then the diuels might haue bin conuerted before this time, for they are in anguish and perpetuall misery: and *Judas* might haue repented, for hee was sensible of horroure enough in his conscience, but that rather did driue him from God, because he could not apprehend the mercie and kindnesse of God.

The reasons to proue this doctrine are,

First, because till such time one haue this perswasion one shall neuer come to true confession, which is one part of
sound

Reason 1

sound repentance, and one will neuer confesse ones finnes without hope of mercie.

2

Secondly, because it is vnpossible that one should pray aright, without one haue this perswasion of mercie, and therefore Christ sets downe this, as the foundation of all true prayer, *Our father which art in Heauen*. For wee can neuer haue any comfort that our finnes are pardoned till wee can boldly goe to him in assurance of mercie. And though wee haue failed of our duties towards him, yet hee will not faile of mercie to vs, because hee is our Father.

Sith this is so, that the perswasion of mercie is a speciall meanes to stirre vs vp to true and sound repentance, it serues for a double reproofe of two sorts of people.

Use 1.

First of those impious beasts and monsters of the world, that if one reprove them for their blasphemy, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, drunkennesse, filthines, and such like finnes; they presently haue an answere for to cloake it, and extenuate it; oh but the Lord is mercifull: but to whom?

whom? to such as continue in this impiety? no: but doest thou abuse the mercie and long suffering of God, that should leade thee to repentance, and so thereby doest harden thy heart in impenitency, and doest heape vp as a treasure vnto thy selfe, wrath against the day of wrath, that thus on earth adde drunkēnes to theft: these abuse the name of God, and it is more fearefull to abuse the Gospell, then the lawe. It were a sinne to breake the positue lawe of a Prince, but more if hee stampe vnder his feete the priuy seale of the Prince, wherein his pardon is written, thus disgracing & mocking it, and yet hope for mercie of him. Wee would count it the part of a madman. such are the dealings of all such presumptuous wretches, they breake the positue lawes of the King of Heauen and earth, and continue in the breach of the first and second table of the commaundements; and not only so, but abuse the priue signet of God, and hope for mercie notwithstanding their vngodlines: but such must know, that the Lord will not bee mercifull to such, but contrariwise,
the

the wrath and seuerity of God. For if a Father should vse all the duties of kindness to his child, and yet hee would bee very rebellious to his Father still, and all because his Father is loving and kinde vnto him; such a childe would be quickly censured to bee a very vngracious and wicked child: how much more are such impious and in a high degree vngodly, which dayly displease God, blaspheme his name, prophane his Sabbaths, &c. and all becaue God is mercifull, and gracious? But these make a contrary vse of the loue of God, then the Prophet *Zachary* exhorts the faithfull vnto, in the place before alleadged, that they should looke vpon him whom they had pierced, and lament, but the wicked wretches looke vpon him, and gnash their teeth at him, and blasphem his name, and so are made impenitent.

2

Secondly, it serues for reproofe of such whom God hath afflicted with many crosses, and they see in themselves many sinnes, and much corruption; and then vpon this they sit themselves downe, whyning and crying, and neuer set forward

ward one foote to goe to God for mercie, and pardon of their finnes, and a removing of the Crosse. Thus they thinke there is lesse mercie in God, then is in this: for if a godly parent, though his childe haue played the vnthrif, and rebellious childe, yet if hee would come home with sorrow and humilitie, and acknowledge his faults, he will presently receiue him and shew him mercie, and yet we cannot perswade our selues of the like successe with God. Thus wee make Gods of our selues, and make the mercifull God more cruell then man, which is most fearefull once to thinke. Can wee forgiue the faults and wrongs committed one to another, that haue but a drop of mercie, in cōparison of that Ocean & Sea of mercie and pittie in God, and shall wee not bee fully assured wee shall haue pardon and forgiuenes of finnes, if wee come to him by repentance? Let vs not dishonour God so highly, to make God lesse mercifull; then mortall man: for man hath made no promise to remit the wrongs and iniuries offered to him; but God hath bound himselfe by covenant, yea by oath

oath to pardon the finnes and offences committed against him. Againe, man cannot forgieue all wrongs perfectly, but hee would haue some stirrings and motions in his minde against the party: but if wee had all the finnes of *Cain, Saul, and Iudas*, yet if wee could come to God with faith in his mercie, and godly sorrow, and repentance for our finnes, hee would receiue vs to mercie, and giue vs a generall pardon of all our finnes, and seale it with the blood of the euerlasting couenant. Wherefore let vs no longer looke vpon the greatnes of our finnes, but vpon the mercie of God, which exceeds our finnes, nor on the greatnesse of our crosses, but vpon the infinitenesse of gods compassion, and kindnesse, and let vs resort to him in hope of mercie.

- 2 The second vse serues for instruction vnto euery one, that whatsoever our crosses bee, or how many soeuer our sins bee, or how great soeuer our offences be, yet let vs haue a resolution to goe to God, and wee shall finde mercie: for wee are in this case fit subiects for his mercy to worke vpon: for mercy pleaseth him,
and

& he is greatly pleased to shew mercy to such. Let vs conclude before hand, that if we resolute to bee true vpright christians, the we may boldly call God Father; & if wee can perswade our selues wee are his children, wee may beleeeue wee shall finde mercie at his hands. Wherefore let vs confesse our sins, and leaue our sins, and wee shall finde mercie. For if a Iudge of an Assize should say to a felon or some malefactor in the Gaole, If you will confesse your theft or trespassse, and resolute to become an honest man, I will pardon your fault, and not onely so, but you shall bee made a Iustice of peace, or some great man; hee would vpon this promise bee moued quickly to confesse his felony, and forgoe his theft; now the Iudge of all the world offers vs this large promise of mercie, that if a sinner will truly, and from his heart confesse his sinnes and resolute to leaue them, hee shall haue pardon, and not onely so, but hee shall bee made a King, and priest vnto God the Father, and this preferment wee shall come vnto, if wee come vnto God in a right manner.

Oh

Oh but how might I doe to come to
bee perswaded of mercy, if I come to
God?

I Gal. 4. 6. First pray vnto God that hee would
giue vs his holy spirit, which seales vnto
our hearts this perswasion of mercy, as
the Apostle saith, *Because wee are sonnes,*
God hath sent forth the spirit of his Sonne
into our hearts, which cryeth, Abba Father.
The spirit of Christ doth worke this as-
surance, that God is our Father, and vp-
pon this assurance, wee shall bee forced
to cry *Abba Father*, and going to our
best Father, wee may bee sure to finde
mercie.

2 Secondly, wee must offer vp our soules
and bodies, & desire in all things to serue
him, & to keepe all his commandements,
then we shall receiue mercy from God, as
that holy man *Nehemiah* saith, *O Lord*
I beseech thee, let thine eare hearken to the
prayers of thy seruant, and to the prayers of
thy seruants, that desire to feare thy name.
So that if wee can but truly desire to
repent, and desire to keepe all Gods
commandements, and desire to bewaile
all our sinnes, and to strue against all cor-
ruptions,

ruptions, and it is certaine wee shall obtaine mercy at the hand of God. For if a christian parent commaund his childe to doe a thing, and if hee doe it willingly and cherefully, and though hee doe it not so perfectly as the parent himselfe; yet hee will take it in good parte, because his child endeauoured to performe it, as well as hee could: how much more will God our heauenly Father accept of the poore desires and endeauours of his children, when hee sees in them a willing desire to doe well? But if our desires bee good and true, then there is a vsing of all good meanes, and ordinances to accomplish the thing desired, or else it is but a slouthfull desire, and it may not bee called truely a desire; else, but a lust: but if wee desire to repent, and to belecue, and also vse all good meanes to repent and belecue, and be humbled because we cannot repent and belecue, as wee should, the Lord will haue mercy vpon such holy desires, and accept the will for the deede. And so much for the second doctrine.

D

And

And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran &c. In all these words is set downe the affection and loue of the father, vpon the resolution of his sonne; the sonne was but comming, but the father is running: hee comes slowly for mercie, but the father is ready and forward to shew mercy: which shews the wonderfull readinesse of God to shew mercy to a penitent sinner, that comes to God for mercy. From hence wee learne this doctrine.

Dott. 3.

That God is very ready to shew mercy vnto euery penitent sinner, that comes to him with a broken and humble heart.

That a penitent sinner can noe sooner looke for mercy from God, but hee is ready to shew mercy to them.

That God is more ready to shew mercy, then penitent sinners can bee to seeke for mercy. This wee see in a naturall father, to his penitent childe here; now a naturall parent, hath made no such promise to shew mercy to his childe, but our heavenly Father hath made a promise to euery penitent sinner to shew him
mercy;

mercy; againe, a naturall parent cannot shew mercy, and kindnesse to his childe, without great costs and labour, but our heavenly Father, hee can shew mercy without any trouble or charges, for it is his name to bee mercifull.

Now if this bee in a naturall parent, that he will shew mercy, though hee haue not promised, yea though it bee to his great cost, and paines; how much more will our heavenly Father shew mercy to his children, sith hee hath promised, and is both able and willing, with ease to doe it. If this bee in man, which hath but a droppe of mercy, in comparison of God, what may a penitent soule expect at the hands of God, who is infinite in mercy, and pittie, to his? This doctrine may very fitly bee proued, by the example of Gods dealing with *David*: that when he had committed two greuous sinnes of adultery, and murder, and had almost slept a twelue moneth in them, in so much that the Lord is faine to send a Herald of armes to him, to awaken him out of his spirituall sleepe, and to helpe him out of his sinnes, and to bring him to repen-

2.Sa.12.13.

tance, but the Prophet could no sooner remember his finnes to him, but hee doth immediatly confesse his sinne, and hee no sooner acknowledge and confesse his finnes, but the Prophet *Nathan* by the mouth of the Lord doth pronounce his pardon: yea before hee did aske it, the Prophet tels him, *the Lord hath put away thy sinne, & thou shalt not die.* Thus also we may see proued, in that Psalmc which is intituled *Dauids learning*, wherein the Prophet confesseth, *when I held my tongue, my bones consumed, and when I roared all the day.* That is, as long as I did dissemble, and seemed to cloake, and hide my faults, I was plagued and tormented, so that roared like an vnreasonable beast through paine: *then I acknowledged my sinne vnto thee, neither hid I mine iniquities, for I thought, I will confesse against my selfe, my wickednesse vnto the Lord, and thou forgane the punishment of my sinne.* Thus wee see, hee could no sooner confesse, but hee had pardon, both from the guilt, and punishment of his sinne, and hee could no sooner seeke for mercy, but hee obtained mercy

Psal. 32.45

mercy at Gods hands.

Also the Prophet *Isay* shewes the mercie of God vnto true repentant sinners where hee saith, *Thou diddest meeete him that reioyced in thee, and did iustly, they remembered thee in thy waies: behold thou art angry, for wee haue sinned, yet in them is continuance, and wee shall be saved:* where the Prophet speakes of the Lord, after the manner of men, that he is ready to meeete them halfe way (as it were) that set themselves in truth, and vprightnesse, to confesse their sinnes, and meeete him by repentance, hee will meeete them swiftly, though they come but softly, and though they come heauily, yet they shall depart ioyfully. And the same Prophet saith in the next chapter of the Lord, *before they call, I will answere, and whiles they speake, I will heare.* This wee may see in the prodigall childe, that before hee asked for foode, cloathes, and other things, which hee stood in neede of, his father bestowes it vpon him, and before hee could make an end of confession of his sinnes, hee fallcs vpon his neck, and embraceth, and receiueth him

Isay 64. 1.

Isay 65. 24

to fauour. Now there are reasons to prouethat this doctrine is so.

Reason 1 Because it is both the name and nature of God, to bee mercifull and shew pittie, as the Prophet *Micah* affirmeth, *hee re-
tayneth not his wrath for euer, because mer-
cy pleaseth him.* When a man is come truly to confesse his sinnes with sorrow, then God must needes shew mercy to him, for mercy pleaseth him; A small intreaty will perswade a man to doe that which hee delighteth in, and takes pleasure in the doing of it: euen so God is easily drawn to shew mercy to the penitent sinner, because hee delights in it, and is well pleased to shew mercy. Oh but how shall I know that I shall receiue mercy from him? why should wee call it in question, if wee bee penitent, for it stands vpon his truth and couenant, to pardon the sinnes of the elect, and for the certaintie thereof hee hath bound himselfe by an oath to fulfill it.

2 Secondly. because ouer and besides our owne prayers, (to obtaine his fauour and mercy) we haue the prayers of Christ our mediator to helpe vs: and although the

the elder brother of this prodigall childe, did grudge and thinke much that his father should shew subh kindnes to his younger brother, which had bin such an vnthrif; yet wee haue our elder brother Iesus Christ, to make continuall intercessio vnto his Father for vs, & in our behalfe. Now if a naturall father can shew such mercie to his childe, when the elder brother speakes against him; how much more shall our heavenly Father shew mercy to vs, when as our elder brother is willing and speakes for vs, and hee is as ready to pray for mercy for vs, as our Father can bee to giue mercy to vs.

Sith it is so, that God is more ready to offer mercy to penitent sinners, then they can bee to aske for mercy; The vses serue;

First for confutation of the Papists, *Use 1.* that in their distresses and troubles, will not goe to this mercifull God, but vnto Saints and Angels for helpe; alack they take a wrong course to forsake this pitifull God, whose name is to shew mercy, and whose nature is to delight in mercy.

and runne to a Saint; this is palpable blindnesse, to forsake the creatour, and receiue the creature: it is as if one should forsake to fetch water from the Sea, where is enough, and runne to a channell that is dry; but if God will not shew mercy, who will? and if hee cannot, who can? shall wee finde more mercy from a Saint or Angell, then from the mercifull God, of whom the fatherlesse findes mercie? This argues they know not Gods name, for then as the Prophet saith; *They that know thy name, will trust in thee, for thou neuer failest them that seeke thee*. They are not perswaded of this name of God, for then they would not seeke to Saints or Angels, but vnto God, who neuer failes any that seeke to him in truth.

Secondly, this serues to shew a great deale of corruption in our sinfull hearts, and nature; for although wee goe not in our distresses and miseries, to Saints or Angels, yet wee seeke vnto such as either will not, or else cannot helpe vs, and so forsake him, where wee might alwaies speede and neuer faile, if wee seeke him
with

with an honest heart, & indeede; for he would meeete vs halfe way, if hee did but perceiue in vs but a true purpose to come to him. One godly teare of true repentance, with a faithfull prayer vnto God, is able to doe vs more good, and to helpe vs out of our distresses, then all outward meanes of friends, money, goods, and such like things, in all this world can doe. But here is our distrust in God, that wee haue more hope that wee shall speed better of our neighbours, and friends in time of trouble, then of God: but this comes to passe, because wee doe not assure our hearts that hee loues vs in Christ Iesus, according vnto Christs prayer, that hee made for all the elect: for if wee did, wee would more depend vpon God, and lesse rely vpon men, more seeke to him for helpe, and lesse trust vpon outward things. •

Ioh. 17. 16.

Thirdly it serues for instruction, that wee should euery one seeke vnto God, chiefly, in all our distresses and troubles, for to bee deliuered. If one will goe to one that is able, let vs goe to God, and if wee would seeke to one that is willing, let

3

let vs seeke vnto God, for there is neither will, nor power wanting in him, if wee come to him in truth. And if wee would haue mercy from God, let vs draw neere to him with penitent and broken hearts, washing our soules with godly sorrow for sinnes, and then the blood of Christ shall be as water to purge vs from all our sinnes and iniquities whatsoeuer.

Oh but my sinnes are so many, I dare not goe to him ! but let not that hinder thee from going to him, for the more wee see our sinnes, and the greater burden wee feele them, the more bold wee may bee encouraged to goe to him for mercy: for onely such are the guests which Christ inuites, and calls, and vnto whom in truth hee was sent: and therefore hee saith; *Come vnto mee all that are heauy-laden, and I will ease y:u. Mathew 11. 28.*

- 4 Fourthly, sith God is ready to shew mercy to euery penitent sinner, when hee comes to him, and neuer casts his faults in his teeth. Let this serue for imitation, vnto euery one of Gods children, that would bee said to bee like God, let them
bee

bee easily intreated to bee reconciled, when matters of differences fall out, and let vs so pardon, and forget the wrongs and iniuries offered vs, that wee neuer vpbraide the parties in the teeth for the same. Oh let vs neuer burst out with these speeches, I wil forgiue him, but I wil neuer forget him, or I will neuer loue him againe, & such like speeches, but this is to be far vnlike God: oh but the offence that is offered mee, is such a great wrong, as no man could put it vp; but bee it that it is so grear, haue not you offered God greater wrongs? and yet hee hath pardoned you, and will not you forgiue him this one wrong that is done to you? in truth this argues that you haue not tasted of the loue of God in Christ, that cannot forgiue your brother so small a fault. But if you will be like God, (which all his children must resemble in truth, if they meane to come to heauen,) you must labour to remit great wrongs, and small wrongs, and all and euery one, and neuer vpbraide them in their teeth of it, but bury it in obliuion, and neuer remember it: and so wee shall bee like to
our

our heauenly Father. And let vs bee so farre from reuenging wrongs offered vs, that wee pray for them that hate vs, and blesse them that curse vs, ouercoming euill with goodnesse, as wee are commaunded, And so much for this first doctrine,

And the sonne said vnto him, Father, I haue sinned against Heauen. Here is the confession of this prodigall childe, to his worthy father: as if hee should haue said, truth it is, I haue sinned against the God of Heauen, in sinning against you my naturall parent, and whereas before I thought my selfe to good to bee your childe, or to remaine within your house, yet now I change my opinion, and thinke not my selfe worthy to bee sonne to so good a father, and that the worst place in your familie is to good for mee, so vntoward a sonne. And so much is to bee vnderstood in the 21 verse. But in that hee confessed hee sinned against God, by disobeying of his father, wee learne this doctrine.

Dott. 4. That those which wrong men, doe sinne

finne against God : In iniuring men on earth, wee sinne against the Lord in heaven. This is proued by the wise man, where hee saith; *Hee that mocketh the poore reprocheth him that made him: hee that derides the creature, doth mocke the creatour: and he that contemnes the worke, doth by consequence speake against the workman.* Pro. 17. 15.

Also the Apostile proues the same when he saith; *Now when yee sin against the brethren, & wound their weak consciences? ye sinne against Christ,* Where the holy Apostile sheweth, that those offences that are committed against the weak brethren, doe redound to bee committed against Christ: when they offend the members, they sinne against the head. Col. 3. 12

And therefore Christ saith; *Whosoever shall offend one of those little ones that beleue in mee, it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his necke, and that hee were drowned in the depth of the Sea.* Thus wee see that if any offend the least christian, he doth offend Christ, and shall bee severely punished: and this Christ will doe, when hee will passe sentence Math. 18. 6

tence of condemnation against the repro-
bates, *I was a hungry, and ye gave mee
no meate, I was thirsty, and ye gave mee
no drinke, I was a stranger, and ye tooke me
not in to you,* and so forth. Where for the
omitting of good duties, to bee perfor-
med to the members of Christ, Christ
takes the omission of dutie, as done to
him selfe, and so a sin done against God.

The reasons to proue this doctrine
are.

Reason 1 First, because whensoever wee wrong
men, we breake the commaundment of
God, and so wee must needs sinne a-
gainst God. Now hee commaundes a
law of equity; that, that I would that
men should vnto mee, doe I the same vn-
to them, and hee bids vs doe good vnto
all, &c. Now when wee breake any of
the diuine lawes of God, wee trespasse
against God, and this made *Dauid* to cry
out; *I haue sinned against thee, against
thee onely.* But one might haue said, *Da-
uid*, you haue wronged *Uriah*, in ta-
king his wife away? It is true, but I
haue broken Gods law, and so sinned a-
gainst God, by killing *Uriah*.

Psal. 51.

Second.

Secondly in wronging men, wee sinne against God, because euery man and woman carries the image of God, and so wronging the person of man, hee wrongs the image of God. And this *Iob* did consider well of, which did terrifie him from wronging his seruants, as appeares by his words, *what then shall I doe when God standeth vp, and when hee shall visite mee, what shall I answer? hee that hath made mee in the wombe, hath hee not made him? hath not hee alone fashioned vs in the wombe?*

2

Sith that God is offended, when man is wronged, it serues, first for instruction, that wee should take heede how wee doe wrong any man, or woman; and not to say, I care not for him, or her, for hee is but a base person, a man of no account, &c. Nay but take heede how you iniure and wrong him, bee hee neuer so base in your eyes: hee may bee an heire of Heauen, and a true child of God, and at least hee carries the image of God, in some measure vpon him: and so you cannot safely wrong him, but you sinne against the God of Heauen: and besides

Use 1

besides you are forbidden to wrong any, bee they neuer so base and vile. But such persons as wrong these base ones, (as they terme them) dare not wrong a greater person: because, if they should, they might haue the law inflicted vppon them, and so thereby bee brought into danger, as to bee cast into prison, &c. But to hurt and trouble a poore christian, that they feare not to doe; but such must know, there is as great danger, to wrong the poorest christian, as in iniuring the greatest personage in the world: for the wrong done to the member, redounds to the head, and the hurt offered to the poorest christian, is a sinne against Christ him selfe: and as the Prophet *Zacharie* saith; *Hee that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.*

Zach. 2, 8.

There is none would endure one to stirre or row a thorne, or any such like thing, in ones eie, but one should feele it; for there is no place so tender about one as the apple of the eye; how much more sensible is God of the iniuries, and wrongs offered vnto his children, and cannot endure them, that thus touch him,

him, in so tender a place, as to wrong his beloued ones, such shall bee sure to smart for it. And if the Lord would not haue *Balaam* to wrong his Asse, much lesse will hee suffer wicked men to wrong his children: but many care not what iniury they doe to others, so they can act it cunningly, and worke it subtilely, that they may not bee seene, or so that the lawes of the Realme will not take hold of them. As the wife many times, towards the husband, shee cares not what hard speeches shee giues him, because there is no humane lawes against her for it: but such wiues must know, that seeing God is offended when their husbands are thus wronged by them, they shall not goe unpunished, vnles they repent; for Gods law and precept is violated, that commaunds wiues to bee obedient to their husbands in the Lord. So many times the husband, hee wrongs his wife in word, countenance, and sometime in their disordered passions in blowes, when in truth there is no cause offered him; but this argues there is but a little feare of God in him, that thus will wrong his

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owne flesh: such men little consider when they reuile their wiues, they reuile God himselfe, and when they thus wrong them they sinne against him, for they breake his commaundement, that chargeth euery husband to loue their wiues, as Christ loued his church, and to dwell with them as men of knowledge, &c. But vnles such husbands come to true repentance for the iniurie thus offered to their wiues, God will surely plague and punish them, as a sinne done against his maiesty.

So many masters which deale cruelly towards their seruants, because they bee poore and meane, both in parentage and outward friends, they care not what wrong they doe vnto them, and how bad they vse them; but such masters must know that in wronging their poore seruants, they sinne against God, and howsoeuer their seruants bee base in their eies, yet they may be members of Christ, and heires of heauen. or at least, hee that made you in the womb, made him in the wombe also, and in wronging them, you wrong the image of God in them; but
if

if they bee Gods seruants, as well as thine, and if they bee the children of the Almighty, then they touch the Apple of his eie: and better it were a millstone were hanged about your necke, and that you were cast into the depth of the Sea, then that you should offend one of these little ones. And if Christ will pronounce sentence of condemnation against such (at his second comming) which omit workes of mercie to his members, how much sorer punishment shall such haue, which wrong and hurt the members of Christ.

Secondly, sith God is offended, when man is iniured, it serues to teach vs, if wee haue wronged any, either in word, or deede, whether it bee husband to his wife, or the wife towards the husband, the childe to the parent, seruant towards the master, or the superiour to the inferiour; wee must not onely content our selues with confessing our fault, to the party thus wronged, but wee must also acknowledge it to God, whose laws wee haue violated and broken, as *David* did, when hee had committed adultery with

Bathsheba, and killed *Uriah*, against thee, thee only haue I sinned, and this *David* would haue done, put case that *Uriah* should haue liued, hee would haue first gone to God, and haue confessed his fault, before hee would haue gone to *Uriah*, (though both are required.) Here in many are very faulty, for they thinke, if they haue fallen out with their neighbours, and bee made friends againe, they haue done enough, and they suppose then they may lawfully come to the Sacrament, because they bee at peace with men, and haue gotten reconciliation with those which they haue offended: it is true, if you had only offended man, then it were sufficient if you had done no more, but sith there is two persons offended, the person of God, and the person of man; therefore there must bee reconciliation got of both, and the fault must bee acknowledged to God, as well as to man, before we can come preparedly to the Sacrament. At for example, If a man rob another by the way side, and from him take his purse, and by this fact, hee breakes not only the lawes of the King,

King, but also the lawes of God; it were not sufficient for the offender to acknowledge the fault to the party robbed, and pray him forgiue him, but hee must also get his pardon from the King, whose law hee hath broken, or else it may bee hee may die for his trespasse, notwithstanding the party robbed hath forgiuen him.

In like manner, when wee haue wronged man, wee must not only seeke to him for to haue the wrong remitted, but also to God, whose law wee haue broken, that hee would forgiue it, and so wee must seeke for a pardon from God, as well as from men, or else we are lyable to haue his iudgments executed vpon vs.

The want of this duty, is the cause why those agreements that are so made vp, betwixt man and man, are so soone broken, that within two or three daies (if occasion bee offered) their hatred is as great againe as euer it was, and that is because they bee at so little paines, and so small charges, to sue out these pardons, whereas if they bought them at a high-

erate, and went to Heaven for them, by sound repentance, confession, and godly sorrow, they would not bee so hasty to fall out with their neighbours againe.

And the neglect of this duty is the cause, that many times wee haue such checkes, and galles in our consciences, because wee make vp these wrongs offered, so sleightly, wee goe to men whom wee haue wronged, but neuer to God, whom wee haue offended. Wherefore to auoide all inconueniences, which may follow vpon this wrong doing, let vs bee exhorted for the time to come, not only to goe to men, but a' so to seek to God, for an acquittance: for hauing a pardon from the King, wee neede not feare the arrest of a petty constable, or any inferior officer belonging to him. And so much for the handling of this point.

And against thee:] that is, against thee my naturall parent, I confes I haue sinned. From hence wee learne.

Dott. 5.

That it is not enough to confesse our sinnes vnto God, but wee must also confesse them to men, so far as wee haue offended

fended them. That knowen wrongs done against men, must bee acknowledged and confessed to men.

This duty Christ doth exhort vnto, *If thou bringest thy gift vnto the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee, leaue there thy offering, before the Altar, and goe thy way, firſt bee reconciled to thy brother, and then come, & offer thy gift.* Math. 5. 23 24.

Thus wee ſee, if any hath ought againſt vs, that wee haue done them any manner of wrong, wee muſt firſt, and principally, goe and ſeek reconciliation, for it is fit, if wee haue ſet a howſe on fire, we ſhould ſeek to quench it, and put caſe wee haue neglected it vntill wee come to the Sacrament, yet wee ſhould then leaue our offering, and defer it, and returne to the party offended, and acknowledge the wrong, crauing pardon for it, for God is willing, and content that his owne ſeruiſe ſhould wait and ſtay, till that duty bee performed, and then come, and offer thy gift.

Alſo in an other place, our ſauour exhortſ them to this duty, ſaying; *If thy brother* Luk 17 3-4

brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if hee repent, forgive him, and though hee sinne seaven times in a day, and seaven times in a day returne againe vnto thee, saying, it repenteth mee; thou shalt forgive him.

There Christ would haue vs to be content to forgive wrongs, if the parties offending will returne, and confesse their faults, for if they performe their duty, to seek reconciliation, we must not fail of our mercy to giue them remission so far as lies in our power.

Reas. n. i Reasons to proue this doctrine to bee true, are these. First, it is drawne fro equity, that he that vnlawfully hath made a wound, should vse all lawfull meanes to heale the wound, and he that through passion sets the house on fire, should also with discretion labour to quench the fire. And hee that through folly hath wronged his brother, must also by wisdom seek to right him againe. And this the law that is imprinted in nature will teach, that what wee would that men should doe vnto vs, that wee should doe vnto them. If this were practised, wee should not so much fall out into displeasures, passions, froward

froward speeches, and vniust actions, against one another.

Secondly, if when wee haue wronged men, we would acknowledge the wrong, to the party offended, it would bee the best way to pacifie their hearts, and to make them thinke well of vs, and to affect vs, notwithstanding the wrong done vnto them; and if wee would greiue our selues, because we haue greiued them, and offended them, it would bee a speciall meanes to make the party wronged, to send vp many a hearty prayer vnto God, for the offendour, that hee would vouchsafe to forgiue him, as well as him selfe. And this benefit will confession of wrongs doe to the party; it will make our foe, to become our faithfull and louing friend.

Thirdly, if wee did vse to confesse the wrong, as soone as wee haue done a wrong, it would make vs beware and take heede of committing of wrongs againe. For if the wife hauing wronged her husband, would seriously consider; what? I haue wronged my husband, and if I purpose to haue forgiuenes, I must
not

not only confesse the iniury to God, but also to my husband. This would make the wife ashamed, and so by that meanes breake the necke of sinne, and it worke humility in ones soule, so that one should haue little lust to fall out, and to wrong one againe.

Now sith it is not enough to confesse and acknowledge the wrongs done to men, vnto God, but wee must confesse it to the parties offended.

It serues first for reproofe of such persons, that come to this point, that if they haue wronged any one, they will confesse it to God, and so thinke they haue done enough, but they must as well performe it to man, as well as to God; for the plaister ought to goe as far as the sore. Oh but what neede there bee any confession to men, when wee haue confessed it to God, for none can forgiue sinnes but God, but you must not only repent to God in Heauen, but also aske forgiuenesse of men on earth, or else the Lord will not forgiue it: for hipocrites may doe the one, as *Iudas, Saul, &c.* But those which are truly vpright, will performe

forme them both; but such as neglect this duty to man, as well as performe it to God, argues they are in loue with their sinne, and loth to haue their nature healed, and their sinnes pardoned.

Secondly, it serues for instruction, that therefore wee should take heede, that we doe not wrong any one, for this will follow confession and acknowledgment of the fault, not only to God, but the party offended, for vntill wee confesse the wrong to the party, and get reconciliation with him, wee must not looke God in the face, nor cannot haue entertainement to any of Gods ordinances, as the word, Sacrament, prayer; for the Sacrament is a loue feast for the sheepe of Christ, and not for wrauling doggs.

Now if the husband haue giuen any angry and churlish speeches to his wife, whereby shee hath taken them to heart, and troubled her minde, let him confesse the fault to her before hee approach nere vnto God in any of his seruices.

So if the wife haue wronged the husband, the childe the parent, the seruant
the

the master, or any one, one another, let them humble themselves who soeuer is guilty, and acknowledge the fault to the party offended, and so get reconciliation, or else wee cannot lift vp pure hands, without wrath, as the Apostle speakes.

Ob. Oh but, hee whom I haue wronged is not in the country, how should I get reconciliation with him? shall I not come to the Sacrament, and other seruices, till I haue confessed my fault to him, that I know not where hee is?

Sol. Yes thou maist come to the word, Sacrament, prayer, and the rest, if thou canst finde in thy selfe a willing heart to aske forgiuenes, if hee were in the Country, as also if thou doest resolute within thine owne soule, that if euer the party offended returnes againe into the Countrey, thou wilt performe this duty. Yf this bee in thee, thou mayest frequent Gods ordinances.

Ob. But what if the party offended will bee so stubborne, that he refuse to be reconciled, and will not pardon mee, though I acknowledge the fault, and offer satisfaction for the hurt & wrong committed?

But

But doe thou the worke of the Lord, *Sol.*
and let it not bee thy default, and then
thou shalt finde mercy of God, for hee
will not deale with vs according to the
successe with the party, but according to
the vprightnes of our heart, and in per-
forming our duties, let vs doe the worke,
and then the Lord will reward vs. And
so much for this point.

I am not worthy to bee called thy sonne,
&c. Here is the last duty of this repen-
tant sinner: his humility, hee is well per-
swaded of his father, but ill perswaded of
himselſe. This doctrine wee learne from
hence.

That true repentance makes one ſee his *Doff. 6.*
own vnworthines: the better repentance,
the more humility: they will eſteeme of
God to bee great, but themſelues to bee
baſe, as wee ſee this prodigall childe: be-
fore, there was no place in the family
good enough, and now there is no place
in the houſe that is bad enough, hee is not
worthy in his owne eyes to bee ſonne
to ſuch a godly father. This wee may
ſee prooued out of the examples of
all

all holy men, when they came to repentance, as *Iacob*; *I am lesse then the least of thy mercies.*

Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, they were ashamed, and confounded in their faces, and that shame and confusion of face belongs to them.

Iob 39.37. And this wee may see in holy *Iob*, when the Lord had shewed him his power and wisdom, hee answers the Lord, *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee, I will lay my hand upon my mouth, &c.*

Iob 42.6; And in an other place, *Iob* speaks when hee came to repentance for all his passionate and distempered words in his afflictions; *I abhor my selfe, and repent in dust and ashes.* And beholding Gods purity, hee saw more evidently his owne impurity, and cause enough to humble and abhorre himselfe for his filthines, and no longer to stand out with God in his owne innocency.

And *Paul* that worthy Apostle, and servant of God, when hee came to repentance, hee confessed, that hee was not worthy to bee called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God.

In

In all which examples, we see these holy men when they came to repentance, they were base and vile in their owne eyes, and saw their owne vnworthines.

The reason to proue this doctrine is.

Because repentance opens our eyes to see more perfectly Gods glorious purity, and ones owne vilenes and impiety, which will so reflect vpon vs, that it will make one low and base in ones own eyes, as may bee seene in the Prophet, when hee cryed out, *Woe is mee I am vndone, because I am a man of polluted lippes, and I dwell in the midst of people of polluted lippes.* Reason. 1
Where God appeares vnto the Prophet, and his maiesty being so perfect, that it reflects vpon him, whereby hee perceiues the more his owne vilenesse and pollution, yea euen in his best parte, as his lippes, which had deliuered the message of God very faithfully. So in truth when wee come to see the multitude of our sinnes, and the hainousenes thereof, wee shall bee made quickly low enough, and bee forced to cry out with the prodigall childe, *I am not worthy to bee called thy sonne.* Isai 64.

Sith

SAH it is so, that true repentance makes
vs see our owne vnworthines;

Use 1.

It serues first for reproofe of such persons, which stand vpon theire owne worthines and goodnes, they will say, they hope they are in as good a case as the best of them all, that mourne and confesse, and keepe such a doe about repentance, & they stand vpon it, that they deserve to be reckoned both with God and man, as well as the best of them that go to sermons, and they liue as wel as the best of them all, and such speeches they are full of. But these speeches argue that they haue not repented, but are as yet vnder the power of sinne, and in the ready way to damnation: for all these are but pharisaicall conceits, for hee cried out hee was not like other men, extortioners, vniust, adulterers, or euen as this publican, &c. but I doe this, and this: and thus boasting himselfe of his owne goodnes, he shewed himselfe a most cursed person; but the poore publican stood not vpon his owne worthines, but runnes vnto God for mercy, and hee is so ashamed that he could not look vp his eies to Heauen

Heauen, but smote his breast, saying; *O Lord be mercifull vnto mee a sinner.* I tell you this man departed to his house iustified rather then the other. Thus wee see the estate of these boasters that stand vpon their owne goodnesse and worthnesse, whereas a poore sinner that feels his sinne, doth wonder at the goodnesse of God, that should saue such a vile wretch as himselfe, so far is hee from boasting in himselfe, that he glorieth in God alone.

Second'y, it serues for consolation vnto such which in truth can finde their sins out, and thereby can perceiue their owne vnworthines; they consider what they were before their calling, and what they are since: they see what originall sin hath brought vpon them; blindnes, darknes, deadnes, hardnes of heart, & in briebe a little diuell incarnate, which makes the pore sinners to cry out, that they are not worthy of the least of Gods mercies, they cry out, shame and confusion belongs to them, and with the Church, it is the Lords mercy, wee are not confounded &c. These may comfort themselves, for

it is a good argument that they haue repented, and that they haue put on a great part of their wedding garment: for this is a great part of a christians worthines, to see his owne vnworthines, and it is certaine, if wee can bee base in our owne eies, wee shall bee precious in Gods eies, and those which see how vile sinne hath made them, shall bee made excellent in the righteousness of Christ. These guests are the welcome guests vnto the Sacrament of the Lords supper, for these are inuited; *Come vnto mee, all that are weary laden, and I will ease you.* And so much in breife for the handling of this doctrine.

Then the father said vnto his seruants, bring forth the best &c. Now the father is so glad of the returne of his wandering childe, that hee presently receiues him to fauour, and hauing his fauours, hee hath all his wants supplied. From hence wee learne this doctrine.

Doct. 7.

That when wee haue the fauour of God, wee shall haue euery thing wee stand in neede of. Nothing shall be wanting

ting when wee haue Gods fauour.

Loue is bountifull, and liberall, cheifly in God. This *David* knew to bee the fountaine of all good, when hee heard them cry out, *Who will shew vs any good?* but hee cries, *Lord lift vp the light of thy countenance vpon vs. Thou hast giuen me more ioy of heart, then they bene had, when their wheate and wine did abound.* Hee had more good by Gods fauour and countenance, then the worldlings could haue in their greatest plenty of outward things.

Psal. 4. 6. 7.

This made the Church in captiuiity bee so earnest in this petition, that she repeats it thrice, noting thereby the excellency of it; *Restore vs againe O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine vpon vs and wee shall bee saved.* So that if God would looke vpo them with a gracious countenance, they should quickly haue a riddance of their miseries.

Psal. 30.

And this the Lord himselfe prescribes as a notable meanes to bring prosperity to soule, body, state, &c. *If my people vpon whom my name is called vpon, doe humble themselves, pray, and seeke my face and*

*2 Chron.
7. 14.*

turne from their wicked waies, then will I beare in Heauen, and bee mercifull to their sinne, and will heale their land. When they performe these duties, (as among the rest) to get and obtaine my fauour, then will I shew these mercies, (I will heare as a mercifull and heavenly Father to deliuer them from their troubles, and bring them such comforts as they stand in neede of.

Use 1.

Sith it is so, that Gods fauour will make supply of all such things as wee neede, it serues to teach vs, if wee would bee furnished thoroughly with all good things for our soules and bodies, for this life and a better, then let vs labour to get peace with God, and to seeke his fauour before all things, for it giues true interest to all things, and it will bring all needefull things. If a man haue the fauour but of an earthly Prince, what outward thing can hee want? If pore, hee can make him rich, if base, yet hee will make him honorable, if in debt, hee will discharge it. If this bee in a mortall man, to him that hee doth fauour, what may wee expect from the fauour of the
King

King of Kings? In his fauour there must needs bee life, and prosperity. If the fauor but of an heathenish King could promote *Mordecai* to such an outward honour and dignity, from so base and dejected estate, that hee must haue a royall robe and apparrell to bee clothed withall, a gallant steede and horse to bee mounted vpon, and a crowne of gold vpon his head, and no base personage to bring all these presents to *Mordecai*, but by the hand of one of the Kings most noble Princes; what shall wee haue, wee may conclude, that God doth fauour, when *Mordecai* shall haue so much, when an earthly King doth meane to honour. It is certaine the King of Heauen will bee far more liberall and bountifull to his fauourites, then an earthly Prince can possible bee, for hee will put vpon them the royall robe of Christs righteousness, which is the best roabe, & they shal all be Conquerours ouer all their spirituall enemies, and bee made Kings and priests.

And they shall haue all these spirituall graces and gifts, deliuered to them by

the King of Heauens Ambassadors, the faithfull ministers of Christ, by the word, and Sacraments. And this shall hee haue, whom the King of Heauen will fauour indeede. And so much for this doctrine.

Then the father said vnto his seruants. In that the father when hee would giue any gift to his son, doth it by the hand of his seruants, wee learne this doctrine.

Doll. 8.

That when God doth purpose to bestow vpon any of his children, any sauing grace, or speciall gift, hee doth it not immediatly from his owne hands, but by the hands of his seruants the Ministers. The Ministers of God, are the conduit pipe to conuay graces and gifts to the children of God.

I cannot haue time to prosecute this point, because the time is past already, and therefore I will leaue it, and only touch a little of an other doctrine, and so wee will make an end for this time.

And the father said, bring forth the best robe, and put it vpon him, and put a ring on his

his finger, and shoes &c. In that, comming to his father, with repentance and humility, the father giues him all things hee stood in neede of, comming ragged, hee hath the best robe put vpon him, and a ring vpon his hand for ornament, and shoes &c. From hence wee learne this doctrine.

That whosoever comes to God with an humble heart, and true repentance, shall receiue at Gods hands whatsoever hee stands in neede of. That repentance will get any thing at Gods hand, not on-ly for necessity, but also something for delight. *Doct. 2.*

This may bee proued by the words which Christ speakes to the Church of *Laodicea*, she boasted of her plenty, when as shee was full of penury: shee thought shee had all things: when shee wanted all good things, yet Christ promiseth her if shee would come to him, hee would furnish her with all good things, and if shee would receiue his counsell, he would decke her with the richest iewels, and therefore hee saith, *I counsell thee to buy* *Reu 3. 7.*
of mee gold tryed by the fier, that thou maist *be*
bee

bee made rich, and white raiment that thou maist bee cloathed, and that thy filthy nakednes may not appeare, & anoint thine eyes with eie salve that thou maist see, &c.

Now in buying and selling, there must bee somewhat giuen and receiued. Now therefore shee must sell her finnes, by repentance, and godly sorrow, and she must esteeme of the fauour of God, and graces of Christ in lieu thereof: and this being done shee shall receiue in steed of her pouerty, the riches, and graces of Christ, and his spirit; and in stead of her filthinesse, she shall haue the white raiment, and righteousnes of Christ, to couer her; and all her wickednes, and infirmities shall bee taken from her: and whereas shee was blinde, that shall bee remoued, and her eyes shall bee opened, and her vnderstanding enlightened, by the spirit of wisdom & knowledge.

But what neede I goe from my text to proue this, that when wee come to true repentance, wee shall haue all good things bestowed vpon vs? For here the father commaunds the seruants to fetch out the best robe: now all the robes that
are

are in Gods wardrobe, are all best robes. For the thiefe vpon the crosse that died with Christ, and repented and belcued in him, had one of the best robes, as well as *Abraham, Jacob*, or any of the Patriarkes; and they are all long robes, not scanting, but couering and hiding all our filthines with the Kingly robes, and shining garment of Christ. And hee will not content himselfe to giue him a robe, but hee will also put a ring vpon his hand, for ornament; so the Lord will decke and adorne euery true repentant sinner, with the comely graces and vertues of his spirit.

And whereas hee comes bare-footed, and surbated with trauell, he puts shooes vpon his feet. So the Lord, when one comes to him by true repentance, he will bestow vpon him the shooes of the preparation of the Gospell of peace, that he may bee able to walke through all rough and hard waies, yea the shadow of death, and shall not bee hurt.

And whereas hee came home with a languishing soule, for want of foode, the father calls for the fat calfe, and the best
chere

cheere hee had, he bestowes vpon him.

So the Lord bestowes vpon the penitent sinner, the best diet, and banquet. Many times, earthly fathers haue it not ready, wherewith they may entertaine their children, but God hath it alwaies in a readines, a feast of fat things, euen a feast of fined wines, and fat things full of marrow, of wines fined, and purified, euen the body and bloud of Christ, for God the Father makes the feast, Iesus Christ is the matter of the feast, and the Holy ghost the applier of it. Now in the Sacrament the worthy receiuers, receiue all these things, & all needfull things shal bee supplied vnto them thereby: for if the eating of one fruit which was forbidden vs, brought such an vniuersall misery vpon all the posterity of *Adam*, how much more may we bee perswaded that the eating of the bread, and the drinking of the wine in the Sacrament, which is commanded, will bring a more happy estate to the worthy receiuers, the other lost, for this meat will not only nourish vs, but cure vs also. The elder brother (which is to be vnderstood of the Iewes) hee was
angry

angry, and repined at the kind dealing of his father towards his yonger brother : but now our elder brother Christ Iesus, is well pleased with euery penitent sinner, which comes to his Father, and makes intercession for them. And if an earthly parent will thus loue a yonger sonne, which hath bin a lewd and riotous companion; how much more will our heavenly Father entertaine euery penitent person, that comes to the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, with resolution to cleaue vnto God, they shall bee sure to haue supply of whatsoeuer grace they stand in neede of.

So also the father reioyceth, and they are merry that his wandring sonne is returned home againe; and therefore the father makes a feast.

First God the Father maketh a feast for euery penitent sinner, and hee reioyceth to see a sinner to returne to him, for *hee* 1er. 32. 41.
delights to doe such good.

Also Christ himselfe reioyceth to see such as conuert vnto him, for it is meate and drinke for him to doe his Fathers will.

And

And the Angels in Heauen doe both desire and reioyce at the conuersion of a sinner. *Luke 15. 7.*

And not onely so, but all the Saints & Church of God, that heare of the conuersion of a sinner, and addition to the Church, will magnifie God, and reioyce vpon it.

Secondly, there will bee a feast of ioy to the party conuerted, when hee sees a wretched creature to come to the feast of God, that before was eating with swine, hee now comes to feast with God, the whole Trinity: before to feede vpon swinish meate, and now to eate no worse then the body and blood of Christ, by faith in the Sacrament, and to afford vs these benefites. First thereby to bee purged from our sinnes, through the blood of Iesus Christ. And secondly, to receiue strength and increase of graces, as faith, repentance, loue, and other sauing graces more. And not only spirituall gifts, but also temporall for body, state, name, and euery thing that is needefull for vs, in euery point according to the covenant which the Lord hath made in *Ezechiel*

ehiel 36. 25. &c. And if wee can come to the Sacrament with true feeling and seeing the want of grace, and also being pained with carrying such a load of sinne, wee may bee assured to bee disburdened of the one, and our want supplied in the other, and so wee shall bee made fit guests for the Lords supper.

Sith it is so, that whoso euer doth come to God with true repentance, and resolution to cleave fast vnto him, shall haue as much as hee stands in neede of, it serues for encouragement to poore penitent sinners, that haue committed many and great sinnes, that they should come to God, and make their mone vnto him, that hee would vouchsafe to pardon all their sinnes, and giue them such graces, whereby they may be assured of his fauour; for certainly if wee come with repentance, and resolute to become new men, and to sicke close vnto him, wee may expect to receiue at his hands euery thing which wee stand in neede of.

Others must bee intreated before they wil doe any thing, but God will giue before wee aske, yea hee will meete a penitent

Use 1.

tent sinner halfe way, if they will but looke towards him, hee will runne towards them with mercy. Oh but I neuer looke to liue in credit againe, and to haue a merry day, my miseries are so many? indeede if you purpose to keepe your sinnes, you must bee sure to keepe your sorrowes; but if you will come to true repentance, and seeke vnto God, he can and will supplie all your wants, and whatsoeuer crosses and losses you haue sustained, hee is able to make vp your broken estate, heale your name, and set you in as great prosperity againe as euer you inioied; for he makes poore, & makes rich, and prosperity comes from him, and he giues to all, and hits none in the teeth. God hath in his wardrobe all kindes of apparrell ready made, if wee seeke vnto him.

And there is no soule so thirsty after the graces of God, but if wee come in humility to him, he will giue thē the sweete graces of his spirit to quench them: wherefore let vs put out all carnall doubts, and worldly cares, and set our selues to performe our duties, and wee vndoubtedly

Vndoubtedly be perswaded to finde his mercies. For hee that bids vs forgiue our bretheren seauenty times seauen times if they seeke vnto vs; much more will God forgiue vs all our sinnes whatsoever, bee they neuer so many, nor neuer so great, if wee seeke vnto him, by true repentance, and acknowledgment of them with griefe and sorrow.

If hee would seeke *Paul* when hee was going to *Damascus*, to persecute the members of Christ, and shew him mercy; how much more will hee shew compassion to such, which now haue desisted from persecuting of the Sains, and committing of other sinnes, and labour to seeke God by true repentance, and a full resolution to serue him in truth.

And to conclude, if God would call for *Adam*, when hee ranne from him to hide himselfe, and all to giue him the pardon of his sinne which hee unhappily had committed; how much more will hee giue all things vnto them both temporall, and spirituall, which with an honest heart seeke
vnto

vnto him, by true repentance, and god-ly sorrow for their finnes, for it hee bee so ready to shew mercie to such which neuer seeke for it, hee will bee more ready to giue mercy to such, as in truth performe this doctrine.

The time being past, let vs
Here make an end
for this
time.

FINIS.

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